



TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN

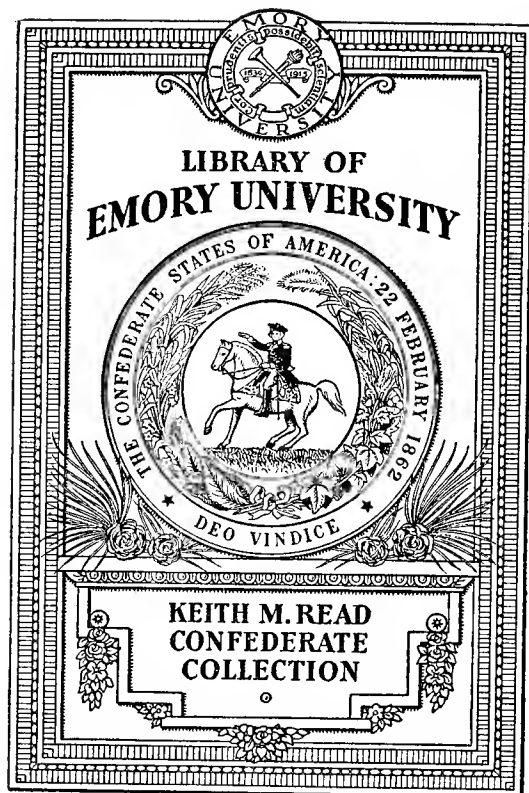
Christ Church, Savannah,

On the 9th and 13th June, 1861.

BY THE

RT. REV. STEPHEN ELLIOTT, D. D.





God's Presence with the Confederate States.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

CHRIST CHURCH, SAVANNAH,

ON THURSDAY, THE 13TH JUNE.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED

AT THE REQUEST OF CONGRESS,

BY THE

President of the Confederate States.

AS A DAY OF

Solemn Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer.

BY THE

RT. REV. STEPHEN ELLIOTT,
RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH.

Published by Request of the Vestry.

SAVANNAH:
W. THORNE WILLIAMS.
1861.

Sermon.

PSALMS 115: 1, 2, 3.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

But our God is in the Heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased.

The devout Proclamation of our President invites us to give, to-day, a public manifestation of our gratitude for the clear proofs of the Divine blessing hitherto extended to the people of the Confederate States in their efforts to maintain and perpetuate public liberty, individual rights and national independence. At the same time it calls upon us to humble ourselves before God in this our time of peril and difficulty, to recognize His righteous government, to acknowledge His goodness in times past, and to supplicate His merciful protection for the future. It is a day to be devoted to mingled gratitude and humiliation—to thanksgiving for great mercies and to a confession of our unworthiness of them—to acknowledgment that unto Him alone belongs the glory of our present condition, and to supplication that he will continue to be our shield and strong tower of defence. This direction which the Proclamation of our Chief Magistrate has given to the devotions of the day will require a review of our civil affairs from the commencement of our constitutional struggle, in order to point out to you the overruling and directing hand of God in all our movements. May His Holy Spirit rest upon me and preserve my pen from bitterness and my tongue from evil speaking, and may that same Spirit enlighten your

minds to perceive His presence in all that is past, and sanctify your hearts to keep it there through all that is before us.

For many years past, God has permitted us, as a people, to be deeply humiliated. While we have enjoyed great material prosperity and have, in a certain sense, maintained our position under the forms of the Constitution, we have been systematically slandered and traduced, in public and in private, at home and abroad, in a way such as no free and independent people has ever before so quietly submitted to. Because of the maintenance of an institution inherited from our fathers, which the rest of the world was pleased to consider as incompatible with civilization and with Christianity, we have been made, thro' every form of literature, a by-word among the nations of the earth. The lecture room, the forum, the senate chamber, the pulpit, have all been used as the instruments of our denunciation. The newspapers of the Northern States and of Europe have vied to express their abhorrence of our social life and their contempt for ourselves. The grave statesman, the flippant poet, the sentimental novelist, the critical reviewer, the witty satirist, has each, in turn, singled out our homes as the targets of his falsehood, and our mothers, and wives, and daughters, as the objects of his insult. In many of the religious bodies of the United States, their communicants from the slaveholding States were excluded from the participation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the Southern ministers from brotherly interchange of services. We had committed an unpardonable sin in doing what Abraham, the friend of God, had done, what Philemon, the dearly beloved fellow laborer of Paul the aged, had not been ashamed to do. All this abuse and misrepresentation was borne according to the temper of men, by some with the patience of christians,

leaving their justification in the hands of God, by others with contempt for an hypocrisy which could see the mote in a brother's eye, but not the beam in its own eye; by not a few with arrogant defiance and words of bitter scorn. So far it had been a war of ideas, but leaving, nevertheless, rankling wounds behind. Gradually it passed from literature to politics, and we were soon made aware that a deep laid scheme, resting upon the double basis of fanaticism and interest, was closing in upon us, which was to reduce to overt acts the ideas which had been so assiduously impressed not only upon the minds but upon the feelings of a whole generation. We were to be humbled, not simply by being held up to the scorn of the noble and generous all the world over, but by being virtually disfranchised, even while retaining the forms of constitutional liberty, and being permitted to keep up the appearances of equality. This scheme was devised by a far-seeing statesman, now occupying a position of commanding influence, who laid his plans with consummate skill and has pursued them, for twenty years, with undeviating firmness, thro' good report and thro' evil report. He advanced from point to point with the steady pace of inevitable destiny, drawing his lines closer and closer around his fluttering yet unresisting victim. He educated through the Press and through the Pulpit, a whole generation, and the two ideas which he has made the ideas of the times, are the irrepressible conflict, under democratic institutions, between freedom and slavery, and the utter inability of slavery to maintain itself in the face of freedom. The one idea combined into a great party the fanatic, the laborer, the foreigner, the farmer, the manufacturer—the other idea gave confidence and fearlessness to his followers. When this powerful and ever growing host was thoroughly prepared

for its work, he decided, after a calm survey of all the chances of the conflict which he was about to inaugurate, that success was inevitable. He perceived that there was but one movement that could defeat his plans—a dissolution of the Union—and he maintained that to be an impossibility. He believed that party divisions could keep the South so distracted—could separate her statesmen by such lines of bitterness—that no combined resistance to his sure but stealthy advances, could ever be brought about. Had all his followers been as prudent as himself, and had not God been on our side, nothing could have saved us from slow but inevitable destruction, for it was not his purpose to strike any blow that might alarm or arouse the South, but to achieve all his purposes thro' seemingly constitutional movements. He well knew that the rapid growth of free territory, filling up with a foreign population of the most radical description, would surely give him what he aimed at, and that gradual changes in the Constitution or plausible interpretations of it would cover all his advances with the forms of law, and render any opposition difficult which proceeded beyond the limits of legislative or judicial resistance, of which he had no fear. And then he looked upon the section he was devoting to ruin and perceived that she was engaged in a fierce Presidential strife even while he was closing his toils around her, well might he have supposed that his game was a sure one and that time only was needed to make his triumph complete. At this moment, in the confidence of his heart, he might well have asked "Where is now their God?" and our answer could only have been "Our God is in the Heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased." But just at that moment, when he considered us deserted and doomed, commenced a series of events which has brought us this day

to the altar of the living God to ascribe the glory of our deliverance not to ourselves but to Him, to confess our unworthiness of all this unmerited goodness and to pray him to continue to bless the work which he has thus far so graciously favored—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

By that mercy of God our greatest difficulties have been successfully passed through, I do not say our greatest privations or our keenest sufferings. We may yet have before us years of self-denial and of self-discipline—we may be called to suffer in our fortunes and in our homes—our chambers may be clothed in mourning and our hearts may be lacerated with sorrow, and yet, with all this it may be true that our greatest difficulties as a nation have been already met and overcome. The severest trials through which a movement, such as ours, is forced to wade, are those which arise in its inception and in its organization. The work which we had undertaken to accomplish was in many respects a novel one. It was not a revolution against intolerable ills—it was not the casting off of a foreign tyranny which had ground us to the dust—it was not even rebellion against the forms of the government under which we had lived, that we might substitute for them other forms, but it was the withdrawal from an Union, which had given us, in spite of its abuse and corrupt administration, a large share of material prosperity and social happiness, and which was associated with all our anticipations of national greatness. The love of the Union was deeply ingrained into the hearts of the nation, and into no part of it more deeply than our own Southern section. We were proud of it as that which gave us dignity abroad and advancement at home. The people

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considered its freedom to be the envy of the world, its constitution the "ne plus ultra" of political wisdom. Our most prominent statesmen had held it up before the nation as the bond of our greatness and as the hope of the human race. WEBSTER had consecrated it, in the Northern mind, by that master piece of eloquence which, as a rhetorical effort, has not been surpassed in ancient or modern times. CLAY had surrounded it with all the charms of his fascinating personal popularity, and had identified it, all through the West, with his wide-spread political opinions. JACKSON had added to the influence of this idol of the West, the idea that the Union had been once preserved by him and that he had left its continued preservation as a sacred legacy to his followers. Even CALHOUN, while advocating the doctrines of State sovereignty, had pressed them most earnestly as the means whereby alone the Union could be maintained. But above all, WASHINGTON—the personification of American constitutional liberty—had committed it, in his dying words, to the people, as the central idea around which the future should forever revolve. It seemed impossible ever to overcome this idea, and yet the question had become one, in the minds of many, no one knew how many, between the Union and a passive subjection to the yoke which had been so skilfully preparing for our necks. Again and again had disunion been attempted and had failed, in some cases, with ignominy, with hopelessness in others. The Union was fast absorbing every thing in the popular mind and becoming the devouring idol of the nation. Before it the constitution had changed its whole scope and meaning—before it liberty was fast becoming a mere word—under its sanction an irresponsible majority was transferring power, prosperity and wealth from one section of the country to the other. The cry of Union had become a sanction for every

irresponsible decree, a war-cry against all opposition that promised to be effectual. The greatest danger of the South was, lest her people should permit this idea to overlay every other consideration and to rise superior to every constitutional infraction. There was no overt act of tyranny to arouse the people to madness—no action on the part of the government to render resistance immediately necessary—nay, the government had, in a certain way, been in the hands of those who were willing to concede to the South her constitutional rights. It was necessary to meet the deeply laid and far reaching scheme of which we spoke just now, by an equally far-seeing and prospective opposition, and the difficulty was lest the people should not see, with any degree of unanimity, the necessity for immediate action. All saw that the time was coming—all looked shudderingly at the prospect of civil convulsion which seemed drawing nearer and nearer—but Hope was strong in many of our most devoted Southern hearts—men who are now standing with their swords in their hands and their shields clasped over the bosom of their mother in the very front rank of battle—that God might yet avert the evil and postpone if not defer forever the stern necessity. Secession was urged more upon what was before us in the future, than upon what had actually taken place. Coming events had, to be sure, cast their ominous shadows before, but as yet there was no act which had come directly home to the cottage and fireside. The raid into Virginia in 1859, had, at the time, produced a deep sensation, but as that Mother of States had treated it lightly herself, having been satisfied with the punishment of the wrong-doers, it had died away. Under these circumstances, the most sanguine feared the issue of the question between Secession and the Union. They believed that a majority in certain States would sanction

an act of separation, but they dreaded such an opposition in each State as might neutralize the action and impair its whole moral effect. Anything like a nearly equal vote in the States would have created a nucleus of opposition which would have rendered the whole proceeding inefficient. But thanks be to God he gave us among ourselves a more remarkable unanimity than any one had dared to hope for, and what was lacking in ourselves, was supplied by the blunders of our adversaries. Instead of supporting those who were not prepared for separation, by granting their moderate demands of constitutional amendment, they struck blow after blow upon an already over excited country, with a folly that was inconceivable. Every plank upon which the Union men of the South desired to stand, was successively struck from under them, and the unanimity which the merits of the question failed to produce, their stubborn obstinacy rendered inevitable. Instead of meeting the advances of the Union men of the South with a lofty magnanimity—a magnanimity which a victorious party can always afford to exhibit—they met them with a defiant arrogance. They showed evidently by all their actions that they considered the struggle as at an end, and that they were commissioned to walk as conquerors over a subjugated territory. One by one, all their friends were driven from them, and thus has been produced an Union of the South which was scarcely hoped for when the struggle first began. And thanks be to God their folly still continues, and if, with humble hearts, we bow ourselves before God and ascribe this important result not to ourselves but to His overruling and protecting Providence, we shall see still greater wonders worked for us, and new stars rising to take their place in our constellation, and nations coming to our aid who were supposed to be bound to the North by

strong bonds of sympathy and fanaticism. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

Another danger which threatened us and which is the "experimentum crucis" of all new nationalities, was the adoption of the permanent constitution under which we were to live. It is always a moment of critical peril. It was the rock upon which Cromwell's successful usurpation crumbled to the dust. So long as he lived, his genius sustained the civil arrangements which he had substituted for the English constitution, but with his death things flowed back into their ancient channel and the nation returned joyfully to the monarchical government even of the Stuarts. It was the rock upon which the European revolutions of 1848 all split. Theorists took up the question of government and inexperienced professors and fantastic poets were deputed to arrange constitutions and to mould the necessities of a practical world. It ended just as any man of common sense might have foreseen that it would end, in the usurpation of a clear-headed man of practical experience. In the formation of the constitution of 1789, that which we have just amended, there was large diversity of opinion, and much time was consumed ere it could be made satisfactory to the thirteen States. The leading men of the country were forced to exert all their influence to secure its adoption. WASHINGTON talked for it—MADISON and HAMILTON and JAY wrote for it—the heroes who had illustrated the war of the Revolution, prayed for it as the seal to their bloody triumph. And yet, with all this array of influence, it was very reluctantly adopted by several of the States, and one distinguished gentleman of South Carolina said, during the debates upon its adoption in the Convention of that State, "I desire no other epitaph

to be written upon my tomb than this: 'Here lies the man who voted against the adoption of the Federal Constitution.' " How wonderful then, that in a few weeks a Congress of gentlemen, who had differed all their lives upon questions of national policy, who were just warm from heated discussions of principles as well as men, who were yet reeking with the sweat of one of the bitterest Presidential elections which had ever distracted the country, should have submitted to the people of the Confederate States a constitution of the most conservative character in which many grave errors of the old constitution had been amended and new features introduced of the highest moral and religious import. They entered that Congress with several questions ominous of evil pressing upon them—questions upon which, if they had erred, their cause must have been shaken to its centre. Among these were the re-opening of the African slave trade, the change in the value of slave representation, and that question which had once before disturbed the Union, the proper scale of duties upon imports and exports. A false step upon any one of these three questions would have been, in our then condition, almost irretrievable. The reopening of the African slave trade would have disgusted Europe and produced great dissatisfaction at home. A change in the value of slave representation would have disaffected that large population of our mountains and pine barrens who own no slaves, and would have thrown them at once into the hands of demagogues. Too high a tariff would have checked the sympathy of England and France, and too low a tariff would have forced us to resort to direct taxation, which a people must be educated to bear. Marvellous then was it in our eyes that these gentlemen should have laid upon the altar of their country all their private views and all their public

differences, and should have adjusted every point with such nice discrimination, with such wise and christian moderation, with such a happy conception of the necessities which surrounded their States, that an almost unanimous shout of applause should have arisen from a delighted constituency. And afterwards, that seven conventions, composed in a like manner of men of every shade of opinion and of every party in politics, should have so quietly and so unanimously accepted their work, can be attributed to nothing else but the overruling spirit of God. All these bodies entered upon their duties with fasting and prayer—they all acknowledged God every day in prayer—they placed him in the forefront of their constitution, and they recognized him as the supreme ruler of the universe, and we therefore can truly say again “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.”

The next trial, through which the Confederate States were called upon to pass, arose out of the regulation of its financial affairs. Napoleon is reported to have said, blasphemously enough, that battles were decided by the heaviest artillery, and the world is fast coming to the conclusion that the longest purse is the arbiter of war. Granting this to be in some measure true, we yet acknowledge most humbly the presence of God with our Government in this most important matter. The most arrogant boast of the North was of its own abounding wealth and of our exceeding poverty, and so long had this assertion been made and so persistently had it been adhered to, that both sides were fast becoming to believe it. The North and the South were both losing sight of the unalterable principles of political economy and had become confused amid the complications of commerce and trade and exchange. In a conflict like this, wealth must be

looked at from a different stand point from that in which it is viewed in a time of peace. At its commencement, the North has most accumulated money, because its great cities have been the converging centres from all parts of this widely extended country, but accumulated money is very soon expended in a war like this, and the ability to continue it will depend far more upon the available income of each section than upon its money capital at the outset. The wealth of the North depends upon manufactures, upon trade, upon commerce, and the North West furnishes a very abundant supply of food. Analyze this wealth and you will perceive that its results depend upon the ability to find consumers and to furnish an exchangeable value upon which to trade. Unless manufactures find a market, they remain a drug upon the hands of the manufacturers and are a loss instead of a gain. Unless trade finds purchasers as well as sellers, it very soon becomes bankrupt in the face of rents and living and the taxation of a war such as this will be, if it goes on. Unless commerce has something to export as well as to import, it must necessarily come to an end, for one cannot buy, as the world goes on now, unless he has something to sell. The North has no great export of its own which is a necessity to the world. Now and then the failure of a grain crop in England or upon the Continent, creates a demand for corn, and then, for a season, the West can furnish a value that is exchangeable. But this is an exceptional case, and the commercial men of the North have never placed any permanent dependence upon it. It has rested its exchanges upon the cotton and tobacco of the South, and it has obtained possession of these by flooding our States with its manufactures and nicnacs of every description, and by acting as the commercial broker of the South. And besides

selling our valuable staple for trifles like these, which we could as well make for ourselves, we have annually distributed much that remained of these staples upon hotels and watering places, in steamboats and railroads, in shops of luxury and temples of fashion and upon what is facetiously called education and accomplishments. And by the time that the cotton and the tobacco were made, it no more belonged to us than did the manufactures of England, and we were compelled in common honesty to let it go where it was really owned. At a very moderate calculation, the exchangeable value thus furnished the North in return for its manufactures and its climate and its fashion, amounted annually to between one and two hundred millions of dollars. But all this is now changed; we have seen the last of it, at least during the war, and a year or two will soon show that the subtraction of this amount from the one side, and the addition of it to the other, will make a marvellous difference in the aggregate of wealth. And while the withholding of this immense sum of money from the North will cripple its resources, it will be put in circulation among ourselves and add to the income and resources of our own citizens. For there is no truer principle in political economy than this, that the distribution of money has as much to do with the wealth of a country as its production. God seems to have endowed our financial officers with the wisdom to seize the strong point of our economical position and our people with the patriotism to receive and adopt it. They have made our great staple to supply for them the place which gold and silver supply for the Banks. As they issue paper money upon the coin which they possess, so will the Confederate States issue paper upon the cotton which it will accumulate by the exchange for it of Confederate bonds, and thus, instead of a currency de-

preciating continually like the old continental money, we shall have a currency always at par, because the cotton which is its basis, is always wanted and receives no injury of any material consequence from being piled up during a blockade. If a currency keeps at par, and it will always keep at par when it is known to represent an actual value, nobody will care to have it redeemed, especially so long as he may be hemmed in from intercourse with any except those whose currency it is. And besides furnishing a Bank capital for the Confederate States, it becomes in the hands of the government an instrument of great power for the regulation and control of foreign alliances. Refusing to permit its export except through our own seaports, it will soon bring all the nations who use our cotton, face to face, with the question between us and our enemies. It is not that cotton is King, but that God has given our statesmen wisdom to use a great advantage aright, and the people self-denial to acquiesce in the arrangement, and to stand manfully by it. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

And in this very matter our God does seem to have smitten our enemies with judicial blindness. Just when they most needed sound wisdom, they have inaugurated a financial system which must cripple their resources. A prohibitory tariff, and one which they will find it difficult to repeal, because it was given as a sop to particular States, just when a nation needs both friends and money, is the very height of folly, and a system of borrowing, at a heavy discount, is a poor beginning for a people boasting of its wealth and arrogant about its resources. The commercial men of the North perceive this weakness and therefore it is that they cry out for quick measures and a short war. They know that

they cannot bear a long one, and very soon will they begin to murmur at any Commander-in-chief who desires to move slowly and surely, and will either hurry him into measures which will ensure his defeat or force him to yield his marshal's baton into bolder because more ignorant hands. Truly does God seem to have ordered every thing for us and to have made every thing work for the security of our cause. How can any one distrust him or be faithless enough to ask with our enemies, "Where is now their God?"

If we turn from the financial to the military affairs of the Confederate States, we perceive the same visible presence of God in our concerns. In the beginning of this movement we appeared to have no resources wherewith to meet the immense preponderance of power that was against us. They had armies, navies, armories, manufactories, every thing that could conduce to their strength—fortresses bristled in our midst and aimed their guns against the people they had been builded to protect—a large, well ordered army, stood upon our Texan frontier quite in a condition to have invaded and embarrassed us—a large armament was fitted out to strike at the heart of South Carolina, which was considered the soul of the rebellion—a navy yard of immense resources, filled with arms and ammunition and ordnance, supported by the strongest fortress in the Union and defended by men of war armed with guns of the heaviest calibre, lay upon our North eastern frontier. A hastily raised militia was all we had to depend upon in the conflict. But in a moment every thing seemed changed in a way more than natural. Skilful officers sprang from every direction into the arena. Armed men arose as if from the dragons teeth which the abolitionists had been sowing for years. And fear seemed to fall upon our enemies—unaccountable fear. Officers who had never quailed

before any living man—soldiers who had borne the old flag to victory wherever it had waved over them—navies which had moved defiant over the world, all, all seemed paralyzed. That large border army surrendered to militia without a blow—that gallant armament, made up of the same fleet which had run in the revolution into the Thames, which had defied the Algerine batteries, which had brought Austria to terms in the Levant, which had spit its fire into the face of the almost impregnable fortress of St. Juan d’Ulloa stood inert and saw a gallant soldier, who was upholding their own flag, beaten out of his fortress by sand batteries and volunteers. That immense navy yard, with its vast resources, with its great power of resistance, with its huge fortress at its back, with its magnificent men-of-war all armed and shotted, was deserted in an unaccountable panic because of the threats of a few almost unarmed citizens and the rolling during the night of well managed locomotives. And nowhere could this panic have occurred more seasonably for us, because it gave us just what we most needed, arms and ammunition and heavy ordnance in great abundance. All this is unaccountable upon any ordinary grounds. But two days before a naval officer of very high rank had reported to headquarters at Washington that this navy yard was impregnable. Is not this very like the noise of chariots and the noise of horses, even the noise of a great host which the Syrians were made to hear when the Lord would deliver Israel? “And they said one to another, Lo, the King of Israel hath hired against us the King of the Hittites and the Kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight and left their tents and their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.” “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.”

And now, my beloved people, after such tokens of God's presence with us in all the departments of our civil affairs, need we be afraid of man's revilings, and man's threats? If God be with us, who can be against us? Shimei's cursings did not hurt David; they only returned upon his own head. And if any be presumptuous enough, in the arrogance of their wealth and in the pride of their numbers, and in the presumption of their Pharisaism to ask "Where is now their God?" we can humbly answer "Our God is in the Heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased." Nay, more, we can tremblingly rejoice and point to His presence with us upon earth. He is too manifestly with our people, giving them unanimity and patriotism—with our rulers, giving them wisdom and moderation and a proper sense of their dependence upon him—with our armies, shielding them in the hour of conflict, for us not to acknowledge it. We should be as brute beasts before him if we did not perceive his presence and humble ourselves before him. God loves to be honored in the assemblies of the Saints, and he delights in the praises and thanksgivings of his people. There is no surer mode of driving Him from us than by refusing to acknowledge His presence among us. It is not humility to be blind to the tokens of God's goodness towards us, it is faithlessness—it is not vain boasting to enumerate his glorious acts in our behalf, it is giving Him the honor due unto His holy name. Read the Psalms of David and note how frequently he enumerates in long and elaborate verse the wondrous acts of the Lord, closing each stanza with the triumphant refrain, "For his mercy endureth forever." And surely he knew how God loved to be praised. Let us not be afraid or ashamed to see the hand of the Lord in every thing, to believe firmly that He does manifest himself for the right, and to be a praying

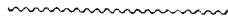
and a thanksgiving people, as well as a fighting people. "Some trust in horses and chariots, but we will trust in the Lord our God."

But while we render thanks unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us, how deeply should their reception humble us! For we have been utterly undeserving of them. They are the tokens of unmerited mercy. If God was only strict to mark iniquity, which of us could stand? As a people, how little have we done for his cause! how poorly have we fulfilled the great mission entrusted to our hands! What wretched stewards have we been of the treasures committed to our keeping! How polluted our land has been with profaneness, with blasphemy, with Sabbath breaking, with the shedding of blood! What violence and recklessness, what extravagance and waste have manifested themselves as the normal condition of our people! what an idolatry to fashion has disfigured the ancient simplicity of our people! What a high value has been put among us upon all those qualities which are the very opposites of the graces of the gospel, upon pride, upon self-reliance, upon animal courage! How inordinately has wealth been sought after and valued! How honor, falsely so called, has been exalted and almost deified! And if with all these hateful sins cleaving to our national skirts, God can yet manifest His presence with us, what might we not hope for, if we would lay down those iniquities at the foot of Jesus' Cross and cry for mercy? Let us begin to-day and with deep humility of spirit, confess our unworthiness and pray the Lord that He will not turn His face from us, but will still enable us to say "Our Lord is in the heavens."

We are engaged, my people, in one of the grandest struggles which ever nerved the hearts or strengthened the hands

of a heroic race. We are fighting for great principles, for sacred objects—principles which must not be compromised, objects which must not be abandoned. We are fighting to prevent ourselves from being transferred from American republicanism to French democracy. We are fighting to rescue the fair name of our social life from the dishonor which has been cast upon it. We are fighting to protect and preserve a race who form a part of our household, and stand with us next to our children. We are fighting to drive away from our sanctuaries the infidel and rationalistic principles which are sweeping over the land and substituting a gospel of the stars and stripes for the gospel of Jesus Christ. These objects are far more important even than liberty, for they concern the inner life, the soul and eternity. Let us be strong and quit ourselves as men—strong in the strength of Jesus, strong in the presence of the Lord of Hosts. Let us, in all our efforts, in all our successes, say unceasingly “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, be the glory” Let us in all our reverses still praise the Lord and in all humility reply “Our God is in the Heavens: He hath done whatsoever he pleased.”

The Silver Trumpets of the Sanctuary.



A S E R M O N

PREACHED TO

THE PULASKI GUARDS

IN

CHRIST CHURCH, SAVANNAH,

ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

BEING THE SUNDAY BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE TO JOIN THE ARMY IN VIRGINIA,

BY THE

RT. REV. STEPHEN ELLIOTT, D. D.,

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

SAVANNAH:
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1861.

A Sermon.

NUMBERS X.: 9.—“ *And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.*”

The children of Israel were led out of their captivity by the outstretched arm of Jehovah himself. He was their pillar of cloud by day, and their pillar of fire by night. He was not only their God, but their King. He made their laws; He guided their armies; He arranged every matter, not only of religious worship but of civil and military discipline, and, among other things, he instituted the usage to which our text refers. He ordered Moses to make two silver trumpets, which were to be blown upon certain occasions, by no less persons than the sons of Aaron, the Priests of the Sanctuary. One of these occasions was when their armies went out to battle, that they might be animated and encouraged in the fight, and brought to the remembrance of the Lord for salvation from their enemies. In this way was war consecrated by religion, and the heart of courage was lighted anew from the altar of God, and the arm of valor was strengthened by the knowledge that they were daily borne upon the wings of prayer before Him whose power no creature is able to resist.

But it was only one species of war which was thus surrounded with the holiness of religious blessing. These trumpets were not to be blown when their armies were mustered for a war of conquest, nor when they gathered themselves together for an alliance with the nations which surrounded them, but only when they went to war in their own land against the enemy that oppressed them. The war which this usage hallow-

ed and sanetified, was a strietly defensive war, one waged for a nation's rights against invasion and oppression. "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets." Under these eireumstances, children of Israel, is the paraphrase of the promise, ye may go to battle without any fear, and strike boldly for your homes and your altars without any guilt. The right, in such ease of self-defence, will be on your side, and God sitteth in the throne judging right. The ehureh will sound the trumpets that shall summon you to the battle, and God dwelleth in the sanetuary between the Cherubim. The congregation will remember you at the morning and the evening saerifice, and the High Priest will remember you when he sprinkles the blood of atonement before the Merey seat, and God will remember you because of his everlasting covenant with you, and will save you from your enemies.

This elose connexion between God and his people has ceased with the ineoming of Christ, and the Gospel is, in many respects, a very different system from the Law. But while different, it is yet the same. It is the perfeet developement of a Divine scheme, and therein it differs as a full-blown flower differs from its bud. It is the full exhibition to man of a plan of merey which the Law shrouded under types and shadows, and therein it differs as a landseape, flooded with light, differs from one seen obseurely through the morning's dawn. It is the spiritualizing of a Divine intereourse with man, which, under the Law, was earried on by sensible symbols, and therein it differs, as the etherial flash of thought from the slow communication by signs. But its moral principles remain the same, for the Law, comprised in the Ten Commandments, delivered from Mount Sinai, is still our rule of right and wrong. Christ spiritualized it, and thus made it more eomprehensive, but he did not alter it. What was morally wrong under the Law, is morally wrong now—what was morally right then, is morally right now. The principles of God's immutable morality nothing can change—no lapse of time—no alteration of dispensations—no mutation of name or nation.

Christian morals stand upon no stronger basis than Israelitish morals, for those rested upon the word of the unchangeable I AM. If defensive war was right then, it is right now; and surely it must have been right when God himself commanded the battle shout to be sounded from his own sanctuary, and promised that he himself would take part in it, and save his people from their enemies.

It is a great error to suppose that our Lord taught the world to believe that his Gospel would make wars to cease over the earth. He knew too well that the wrong must ever battle against the right, and so he said: "I come not to bring peace, but a sword." The principles of his doctrine must necessarily modify the horrors of war, and leaven that fearful scourge with humanity and mercy, but it was never the teaching of Him, who foretold that wars and rumors of wars should be among the most notable signs of the coming of the Day of Judgment, that they would ever blot it out. In the Apocalypse, that prophetic roll of the world's history, whose leaves we are perpetually deciphering under the march of events, conflict succeeds conflict, up to the very moment when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and warriors, with garments rolled in blood, usher in its terrors. Great as is the glory of the Gospel—unspeakable as are its mercies and its blessings—they will never rid us of the curse which God has stamped upon the world. War will ever, while the world endures, mingle its miseries with that full tide of sorrow which sin has brought upon mankind. When sickness shall cease, when sorrow shall cease, when affliction shall cease, when poverty shall cease, then will war cease, for they are all only branches of the same root of evil which nothing can eradicate from the earth. Christ has limited their duration, but that limit is coeval with the world's existence. When the heavens and the earth, that now are, shall pass away, there shall arise new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and therein shall be no more curse. All evil will cease, because all sin will cease, and together shall all man's enemies be cast into outer darkness.

But, while this is so, another question may press itself upon the tender conscience and give it embarrassment. While, as is evident, wars will continue unto the end, is there anything in the Gospel which forbids a Christian man from bearing arms and fighting in his country's service? We unhesitatingly answer, that there is nothing; no shadow of a prohibition where the war is defensive. In the Gospel, as in the Law, when Christian men "go to war in their land against the enemy that oppresseth them," they may go with the certain assurance that they are doing no wrong, that they are acting according to the purest reason, and that nothing can be found in the word of God which shall condemn them. "Whatsoever is absolutely necessary, says Jeremy Taylor, is certainly lawful; and since Christ hath nowhere forbidden kings to defend themselves and their people against violence, in this case there is no law at all to be considered; since there is a right of nature, which no law of God hath restrained; and, by that right, all men are on an equal footing, and, therefore, if they be not safe from injury, it is their own fault, or their own unhappiness; they may if they will, and if they can; and they have no measures in this, but that they take care they be defended and quit from the danger, and no more."—vol. XII: 448-449, (Heber's edition.) This is the abstract argument derived from the silence of our Lord, but there are indications in the New Testament that the profession of a soldier was not contrary to the doctrine of Christ. When John the Baptist came rebuking sin in the spirit and power of Elijah—the sternest of all the ancient prophets—and preparing the way of the Lord, the soldiers demanded of him, "And what shall we do?" And he said unto them, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Not a word against the lawfulness of their occupation; not a word indicating that He was near at hand who would strike by his Gospel at the root of their profession, but simply an injunction to observe in their conduct the principles of mercy, of justice, and of obedience. And if it be said, that this answer was given by John ere yet the Holy Spirit had been sent

by our ascended Lord to guide his people into all truth, we have the yet stronger case of Cornelius, an officer of the Roman army, in active service, whose history is contained, singularly enough, in the second lesson of the morning service. As a soldier and an officer he had served God earnestly, so that the writer of the Acts of the Apostles calls him "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." His position did not interfere with his religion, nor did it hinder the grace of God, for that found him in the daily performance of a soldier's duty, and an angel of God was commissioned to say unto him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God;" and he was chosen to be the first Gentile convert, and to illustrate the divine truth that on the Gentiles, also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of God came upon him, although a soldier, and then followed the baptism of man, and we are nowhere instructed that because he became a Christian, therefore he ceased to be a soldier. And in one of the early apologies for Christianity, we hear Tertullian saying to the Roman Emperor: "We, Christians, fill your cities, your islands, your towns, your boroughs, your camp, your senate, and your forum." And this could not have been true, had the early Church forbidden her communicants to enter into service as soldiers. The military life seems to have been treated by Christ as was every other department of domestic and social arrangement. It was placed by him upon its proper principles, and his spirit was left in the world to work, silently yet surely, its conformity to those principles. He never denounced it, although his Gospel was come to preach peace on earth, good will towards men.

Upon these principles, soldiers, I feel that the trumpets may sound in your behalf from the sanctuary of God, and that you may go where duty calls you, believing that you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and your country saved from its enemies. The conflict in which you are about to mingle is one waged upon the holiest grounds of self-preservation and self-defence. Everything most dear and sacred

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to every one of us is involved in it. We are contending for SECURITY, the object of all government and law and the basis of all domestic and social happiness. In ancient times, nations contended for conquest, for dominion, for spoils; in modern times, they contend for security. That phrase, which for some centuries, has moulded the politics of Europe—the balance of power—is no idle figment; it rests upon this very necessity for security among the nations which insist upon its preservation. Nearly all the later wars of England have turned upon this very point, that she might be secure in her interests from the ambition of powerful or jealous neighbors, and might prevent any one of the great powers from accumulating too much territory or too much influence. Hence the pertinaciousness with which she hung upon the skirts of the first Napoleon, and the jealousy with which she watches all the movements of his successor. For, without security, there can be no growth in any of the elements of a people's greatness—no accumulation of capital—no advancement in arts or elegance—no independence of thought or feeling—nay, no comfort abroad or at home. No people can be happy or contented, can feel any self-respect, or deserve any respect from others, who are not secure in their rights or property. The consciousness that they are consenting to live in a state of sufferance humiliates them and unfits them for self-government. They lose the spirit of independence; they forfeit their place in the rank of nations, and as inevitably as the brave man holds dominion over the coward, will the usurper and the tyrant hold dominion over them.

The feeling of INSECURITY, soldiers, was that which lay at the basis of all our sectional movements. The Anglo-Saxon race has never waited until the stroke of tyranny actually descended. It has ever snuffed tyranny at a distance and armed itself against its advent. The barons who wrested Magna Charta from John, at Runnymede; the bold commoners who brought the Stuarts to the proper knowledge of a people's rights; the colonies which struck the blow against taxation without representation, all acted upon this principle. They

demanding security for their rights, and when it was not granted them, they cast their swords into the scale. None of these were suffering from any overt act of tyranny, but they perceived that principles had been advanced and sanctioned which must end in utter servitude. And this was precisely our position. We foresaw that there could be no security for us under the constitutional interpretation which had been adopted by an irresponsible and ever swelling majority; that there could be no national life for us when we were no longer reckoned as equals, but were pointed at as barbarians and lepers, carrying about with us our manifest taint of infamy. We should have been leaving to our children an inheritance of shame and a life of unceasing conflict. The time had come when it was essential that we should enter upon this struggle for life and death, that our State governments should cast over us the shield of their protection and give us, under a new government, that security which was essential to our peace and prosperity. This legitimate action has brought upon us the barbarous invasion which you are marching to hurl back upon its unprincipled projectors. The Mother of States—the nursery of heroes, of orators and of statesmen—the shrine which contains the ashes of Washington—summons you to her defence, and points you to the ruthless hordes who have dared to pollute her soil with their unhallowed tread, and to violate all the charities of civilized life. Against such a warfare you may advance, soldiers, with the assurance that you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and will be saved from your enemies. As you mingle in the strife, you will rejoice that from every sanctuary in the land the silver trumpets will be sounding and bearing your cause into the presence of Him who giveth not always the battle to the strong, but can save by many or by few.

Soldiers, this is no holiday work in which you are about to engage. For the first time will you witness the stern realities of war, and you must prepare yourselves to encounter them. Before you are labor, fatigue, hardship, privation, danger, the battle field. So far in life you have known these

things only by name. Count them not as trifles, lest when they come upon you they may find you amazed at their severe and cruel visage. They must be borne, and they can be borne with courage and with cheerfulness, but not unless you put your trust in Him "who giveth strength and power unto his people." If you call upon him, he will be with you in the day of trouble; if you acknowledge him, he will acknowledge you. And the soldier, of all men, is he who should keep nearest to his God and Saviour. No man carries, so emphatically, his life in his hand, and none, therefore, should be more ready, at any moment, to return it to his God. What men need in war, is not mere physical courage—most men have that in common with the brutes—they require moral courage to withstand temptation, to practice temperance, to endure hardships like good soldiers, to be watchful, obedient, patient, merciful. Many more soldiers perish in war from careless habits than from the stroke of the enemy—from sickness and disease engendered by recklessness, than by the sword. Military discipline, to which you are now subjecting yourselves, will force upon you this attention to temperance and moderation, but it will require moral cultivation to make you what true soldiers should aim to be. The Duke of Marlborough, the profoundest military genius England has ever produced, perceived the importance of the moral element among soldiers, and he enforced, throughout his army, the strictest attention to prayer. He never went into battle, he never sat down before a fortress to besiege it, without first calling his army to prayer; and wonderful to say, through all his long career of war—battling as he did against the most powerful monarch of Europe, and the most consummate generals of the time—he never lost a battle, nor ever raised a siege. And if, from this moment of your departure for your field of action, you would adopt this practice in your corps, of daily morning and evening prayer, of prayer upon the eve of every conflict, of thanksgiving for victory and deliverance, you might be known in the army as the "praying company," but you would certainly be known as the moral, the brave, the efficient com-

pany of your regiment. To carry with you into battle, besides your own strength, the strength of the Lord of Hosts, is to be irresistible. May you be thus doubly armed—knowing no fear, save the fear of God.

And in this contest will you be called upon, most especially, to cultivate mercy and humanity. All war has a tendency to excite the passions, to infuriate the temper, and to harden the heart, but especially a war such as this, which aims at our destruction and strikes its blow at the very heart. It will be very difficult to observe the limits of Christian warfare in a conflict which is begun by summoning thieves and burglars and cut-throats to the contest. If the gentlemen of the North had come forth to meet the gentlemen of the South, all the rules of chivalry might have been observed, and this war, cruel as it is likely to be under any circumstances, might have worn the aspect of civilization and christianity. But when it has been committed to the hands of such men as haunt the purlieus of all large cities, when our homes and our fire-sides are threatened with pollution by the savages who have been swept together from the prisons and penitentiaries of the North, it will require an almost divine moderation to stay the arm of vengeance. But the Christian must never forget that his God has said, "Vengeance belongeth to me—I will repay, saith the Lord." Even with such enemies, let mercy and humanity predominate. Strike no more blows than are necessary for victory, and wherever and whenever the cry for mercy shall reach your ear, listen to it and grant its prayer. Let the flag under which you fight be stained with no unnecessary blood. Let no mother's heart be wrung, no sister's bosom lacerated, by your ferocity. The attribute of Him, from the door of whose sanctuary the silver trumpets shall animate you to battle, is "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." And he will bless you, if you honor his attribute of mercy.

And now, soldiers, I send you forth with the Church's benediction and blessing. Your cause is just—your leaders are skilful—your comrades are brave and earnest. Before

you, is a ruthless enemy—behind you, are your homes and your firesides. Who can doubt the issue if you will but keep the Lord on your side? Remember him always, for to him belong the issues of life and death. And we, Priests of the Sanctuary, who are not permitted to put on the armor of the warrior, will yet be with you blowing the silver trumpets in the ears of the God of battles, praying him ever to remember you, and to be your defence, now and evermore.

